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ABSTRACT

Although the school-to-work and youth development fields come from very different beginnings, they share the goal of preparing all young people, including "high-risk youth," for adulthood by learning in context, actively participating in their own learning, and being challenged and supported to excel. Despite their shared visions for youth, many school-to-work and youth development efforts have felt strong pressures to defend their own "turf." It is, however, possible to cite several cases of model school-to-work programs and strategies that have consciously or unconsciously employed a "youth development lens" in designing and implementing their programs. Those examples confirm that the school-to-work movement can benefit and be strengthened by incorporating a youth development perspective to serving young people and building bridges not only with schools and employers but also with the "youth development field," specifically national and community-based youth organizations. Youth development organizations can help school-to-work system developers consider the impacts of neighborhoods, families, and other broader environmental impacts on their programs. Furthermore, youth development organizations are well positioned to offer ongoing training and technical assistance to school-to-work providers and to bring a full range of community leaders, practitioners, and youths into school-to-work planning/implementation discussions. (Contains 22 references.) (MN)

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Education Reform and School-to-Work Transition Series

SCHOOL-TO-WORK OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH THE LENS OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

ED 391 977

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School-to-Work Opportunities Through the Lens of Youth Development

by
Shepherd Zeldin and Ivan Charner

Prepared for
National Institute for Work and Learning
Academy for Educational Development

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Contents

Introduction	1
The Lens of Youth Development	2
Youth Development Outcomes	5
School-to-Work Through the Outcomes Lens	8
Developmental Opportunities and Supports	10
School-to-Work Through the Opportunities and Supports Lens	12
Linking School-to-Work and Youth Development to Build Healthy Communities for Youth	14
Conclusion	17
References	19

Introduction

The United States is creating generations of "high risk youth" and a "forgotten half" of young people who are ill-prepared to move successfully through adolescence and into adulthood. While adolescents have to take responsibility for their behavior, it is also true that the United States does not offer them much support, a fact that is readily apparent through comparisons with other industrialized countries. Over the last two decades, thoughtful and practical recommendations for how to change our way of preparing young people have been offered on a recurring basis (Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee, 1974; William T. Grant Foundation Commission, 1988; National Commission on Children, 1991; National Research Council, 1993).

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 offers a vital and practical approach for responding to many of these recommendations. But the legislation is only a guide for states and local communities. The challenge will be for communities, concerned with preparing youth for adulthood, to incorporate new perspectives and new partners as they plan and implement school-to-work (STW) programs and systems.

The purpose of this paper is to focus a youth development lens on the school-to-work opportunities system as it is currently emerging in the United States. By doing so, the paper seeks to broaden the perspective of the school-to-work movement with regard to youth outcomes as well as the supports and opportunities that young people receive through school-based and work-based learning activities. It also seeks to highlight the potential of youth-serving organizations as essential partners in local school-to-work initiatives.

Although the school-to-work and youth development fields come from very different beginnings, they share some key philosophies and approaches:

Mission and Goals: The goal of youth policy is to prepare young people for adulthood, not simply to deter or seek to control young people from engaging in problem behaviors.

Places: Young people require and deserve ready access to places where they are respected by adults, must respond to high expectations, have a voice, and are able to make a contribution.

Strategies: Young people develop by learning in context, by being active participants in their own learning, and by being challenged and supported to excel.

Partnerships: Young people grow up in communities. Local partnerships—including a full spectrum of youth, agencies, organizations, and residents—are necessary to create and sustain healthy communities with and for young people.

These shared visions for youth would suggest that the two fields should naturally work together. In the 1990s, however, with strong pressures to defend one's "own turf," collaboration has become even more difficult. Nonetheless, our position is that there is much that the fields can learn from each other and much that can be done jointly to prepare young people to be productive workers as well as healthy, caring, and contributing adults. This paper is mainly a one-way analysis, focusing on how school-to-work can be strengthened by considering a youth development perspective and by involving the youth development field. Throughout the paper, we provide examples of model school-to-work programs and strategies that have consciously or unconsciously employed a youth development lens in designing or implementing their programs. In brief, we hope to show the school-to-work field that there are clear benefits to considering youth development outcomes, supports, and opportunities for school-to-work programming.

The Lens of Youth Development

Young people need safe places to go, caring people to talk to, and exciting possibilities to explore (Murphy, 1993).

The last five years have witnessed a renewed focus on youth development, a term that broadly describes the processes through which young people learn and develop during the stage of life called adolescence. The youth development perspective has come to represent an approach to youth policy that emphasizes human development as its ultimate goal and the provision of opportunities and supports as essential strategies. The youth development perspective, then, is a set of principles and ideas about who young people are and what types of developmental experiences they require to move successfully through adolescence and into young adulthood (Pittman and Cahill, 1991). The perspective is based on the following assertions:

- Young people need academic and career-oriented skills, but these are not enough. Healthy and accomplished young people also need positive and realistic perceptions about themselves and others, and the ability to participate fully in a range of community settings and activities.

- Youth development occurs in formal settings such as schools and worksites, but also in informal systems and settings, such as community organizations, families, peer groups, parks, and streets. Interactions in informal settings are as vital as those in formal systems.

- Youth development is ongoing, mediated through caring relationships and triggered through active participation.

Currently, there is no legislatively supported youth development field in the United States, though many are working to create public awareness of the important work done by youth-serving organizations. In the interim, the youth development field has come to include those organizations and programs that young people participate in voluntarily and that seek to provide young people with safe places, exciting possibilities to explore, and caring people with whom to form relationships. The most visible members of the field to policy-makers are national youth-serving organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Inc., Cooperative Extension, and Campfire. But there are just as many "less visible" community-operated youth organizations that have a powerful influence on the daily lives of young people. However, these less visible youth organizations, which include community centers, parks and recreation programs, after-school programs, religious institutions, and family support programs, are not typically engaged by schools or national youth organizations.

To begin to articulate what the youth development field can do to strengthen the school-to-work mission, we offer the following observations about the strengths of the youth development field:

- The youth development field offers safe places for young people to go in their neighborhoods—places they can call their own. The youth development field is skilled at interacting with young people and often has a specific expertise in working with youth from "high-risk" environments. They are able to take a "holistic" view of young people and their communities. This knowledge can be used to engage and retain young people in programs and to create program strategies that build on community strengths (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1993).

- The youth development field offers a body of knowledge and an array of practitioners who are able to discuss the relationship between careers and development and the implications for practice. Youth development can provide

practical insight into how to promote a sense of mastery and community membership among young people, in addition to promoting social skills, such as citizenship and cultural competence (Pittman, 1991).

- Work experience can convey many benefits to youth, in large part because of the developmental opportunities and supports that are embedded within the experience. But it is not possible to provide all youth with quality work experiences because some youth may not be prepared, and others may be too young for them. The youth development field can offer "comparable" experiences to young people in settings outside of work. Youth organizations offer young people the chance to take legitimate leadership, to be responsible for their own performance and that of others, to be part of a team, and to contribute (Gambone, 1993).

- The youth development field can best access community organizations and residents, as well as youth who are at risk or who have become disengaged from school and community—the primary population that makes up the "forgotten half" (Whelan and Wynn, 1995) .

With these observations in mind, we believe that a fruitful beginning is to have those in the school-to-work field answer the following three questions, questions that form the foundation of the youth development perspective:

- What is the full range of desirable youth outcomes—knowledge, attitudes, skills—that young people must acquire to move successfully through adolescence and into adulthood?

- What are the day-to-day experiences—services, opportunities, and supports—that young people require to achieve these outcomes?

- What is the full range of places in the community—schools, worksites, community centers, recreation programs, youth organizations, families—where young people can go for opportunity and support?

By asking and answering these questions, the STW field can build on the strengths of the youth development perspective in terms of preparing young people for adulthood. And, equally important, a common ground might be found, leading to sustained community-wide advocacy and action on behalf of young people.

Youth Development Outcomes

> *Academic and employability competencies are not enough for young people to succeed as adults. They must also gain civic, social, health, and cultural competencies. But competencies are not enough. Young people must also gain a sense of identity, characterized by perceptions of confidence, connection and commitment towards oneself and others* (Pittman and Cahill, 1991).
>
> *In America, we do what we measure* (Senator Daniel Moynihan, cited in Barton, 1994).

Who is a successful young person? What are the youth outcomes that define successful youth? Political, policy, and community leaders most often emphasize two ways of describing outcomes for young people:

- **Problem Prevention Outcomes,** where young people are deemed successful by the absence of problem behaviors, such as drug and alcohol use, delinquency, and early sexual behavior.

- **Status Achievement Outcomes,** where young people are deemed successful when they achieve the "endpoints" or "final" outcomes of adolescence, such as graduation from high school, stable employment, and/or enrollment in postsecondary education.

The policy focus on problem prevention and status achievement outcomes is hardly surprising. When it comes to young people, we can quickly describe what we want to prevent, but are less skilled at articulating what we seek to promote. Similarly, in the United States, we typically define people by what they have achieved. For young people, achievement is graduating from high school or college, getting a good job, and making enough money to live independently.

The youth development field has struggled to confront these assumptions. By seeking only to prevent problems, policy and programs run the risk of setting low expectations for young people. An exclusive focus on achievement outcomes might also lead to low expectations for young people. Certainly, young people need to acquire the skills to succeed in the labor market, but to become successful adults they also require a different, yet related, set of competencies to achieve a positive identity and to become good family members and contributing citizens. These additional youth outcomes may be labeled as developmental or preparation outcomes, where young people are deemed successful as they develop a positive sense of self and a sense

of connection and commitment to others, and develop the abilities and motivation to succeed in school and to participate fully in family and community life.

This is not to suggest that policies and programs should not aim to prevent adolescent problems or to promote "adult status" achievements. Certainly, we want this for all young people. Such a narrow focus, however, leads us to miss the essence of adolescence—the full range of competencies and perceptions that make up the developing young person. The research data are clear: if youth can acquire and continue to strengthen a full range of developmental outcomes, then they are more likely to achieve the traditional indicators of success, be they problem prevention or status achievement (Dryfoos, 1990; Benard, 1991; Hamilton, 1990; Werner, 1986).

Exemplary frontline youth-serving practitioners know this from their daily interactions with young people. Regardless of the youth workers' place of work—school, youth center, detention center, or employment program—these practitioners recognize that while they may have different "final goals" for young people, the way to get there is to promote developmental outcomes. These practitioners use the language of development: self-confidence, belonging, civic competencies, problem-solving abilities, coping skills, oral communication skills, and cultural competence. Figure 1 offers a taxonomy of developmental outcomes that has been derived from many interviews and workshops with youth workers and community leaders.

An explicit focus on developmental outcomes has been essential to the emerging youth development field. Not only is the perspective consistent with past research and exemplary practice, but the field has found that stating developmental goals for young people accomplishes the following:

- Goals help clarify the mission of the youth development field. Instead of a mission centered around problem prevention, the field has been able to identify itself in affirmative terms with a focus on how it positively benefits young people.

- Goals guide daily program planning by pushing stakeholders to articulate how their actions seek to help young people achieve specific youth outcomes.

- Goals have accountability and evaluation implications. Rather than judging program effectiveness only by drug, pregnancy, graduation, or job acquisition rates of participants, programs are also able to hold themselves accountable for a broader range of developmental outcomes.

- Goals energize practitioners and provides a common mission for community partnerships. Sustained action arises from a focus on affirmative and obtainable goals rather than only on the deterrence of youth problems (or even the achievement of somewhat distant "final" outcomes).

Figure 1:

Developmental (Preparation) Youth Outcomes

Aspects of Identity. Perceptions of self-confidence and well-being, and connection and commitment to others.

SAFETY AND STRUCTURE: A perception that one is safe in the world and that daily events are somewhat predictable.

SELF-WORTH: A perception that one is a "good person" who is able to make contributions to self and others.

MASTERY AND FUTURE: A perception that one is "making it" and will be able to succeed in the future.

BELONGING AND MEMBERSHIP: A perception that one belongs and is valued by others in the family and in the community.

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY: A perception that one has some control over daily events and is accountable for one's own actions and for the consequences on others.

SELF-AWARENESS AND SPIRITUALITY: A perception that one is unique and is intimately attached to extended families, cultural groups, communities, higher deities, and/or principles.

Areas of Ability. The knowledge, skills, strategies, and attitudes that allow the young person to act on and respond to people and events.

PHYSICAL HEALTH: The ability and motivation to act in ways that best ensure current and future physical health for self and for others.

MENTAL HEALTH: The ability and motivation to respond affirmatively and to cope with positive and adverse situations, to reflect on one's emotions and surroundings, and to engage in leisure and fun.

INTELLECTUAL: The ability and motivation to learn in school and in other settings; to gain the basic knowledge needed to graduate from high school; to use critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and expressive skills; and to conduct independent study.

EMPLOYABILITY: The ability and motivation to gain the functional and organizational skills necessary for employment, including an understanding of careers and options and the steps necessary to reach goals.

CIVIC AND SOCIAL: The ability and motivation to work collaboratively with others for the larger good and to sustain caring friendships and relationships with others.

CULTURAL: The ability and motivation to respect and affirmatively respond to differences among groups and individuals of diverse backgrounds, interests, and traditions.

School-to-Work Through the Outcomes Lens

The school-to-work field emphasizes career-oriented knowledge and skills. While there is some discussion of other types of "developmental" outcomes (such as a sense of mastery and hope, and civic and social abilities), these have not been a focus of system accountability or evaluation (Barton, 1994; Orr, 1995). The risk, however, is that an unduly narrow list of work- or career-focused youth outcomes will not accurately reflect what is actually being promoted at the local level on a daily basis by school-to-work practitioners. Further, a narrow set of outcomes may inadvertently lead school-to-work to adopt a narrow set of system and program goals that will be reflected in local practice.

What are the youth outcomes that school-to-work programs seek to promote among young people? On the surface, the answer is easy—demonstrated performance measures such as academic gains; attainment of high school diplomas, skill certificates, and placement in further education; training; and employment. However, when youth in STW programs speak, their emphasis is on a broader range of benefits:

Everyday you learn something new. We've learned more than we immediately need to know, but that's good....My class teaches you how to feel it, not just read it. That's where change takes place—when you're doing instead of just reading.... I have a half day of book education and a half day of work experience. Working at the metal products company has helped me with my math considerably....

The program has given me a new way to learn. The program showed me that I was more capable than I thought....This is about empowerment—about getting control of your life and staying with it....In high school, you study for the grade. Here it's for your own knowledge, your own interest. You feel like it is in your control....

Because of the program, I feel like I belong to a group, and I'm not the only one with real problems....Being in the program gives me something to look forward to everyday....

The program has given me a new sense of responsibility. I had a lot of behavior problems; it has helped me settle down, and now I'm serious about graduating....I have trouble dealing with authority—but I'm in school now and liking it....
(Charner et al., 1995).

The STW programs and systems that these students participate in focus on a broader set of goals than just preparing young people for careers or postsecondary education. And these young people fully appreciate that the school-to-work programs are promoting outcomes—mastery, responsibility, membership, social skills, civic competencies, hope—that are important to them. It seems clear from these examples that school-to-work is also in the business of developmental youth outcomes. This broader perspective might be necessary if school-to-work is to fully achieve its "bottom line" goals:

- preparing all youth to identify and navigate paths to productive and progressively more rewarding roles in the workplace
- using workplaces as active learning environments in the educational process
- helping all students attain high academic and occupational standards
- motivating all youth, including low-achieving youth, school dropouts, and youth with disabilities, to stay in or return to school or a classroom setting and strive to succeed

- promoting the formation of local partnerships that are dedicated to linking the worlds of school and work among schools, employers, government, community-based organizations, parents, students, and training and human service agencies.

Developmental Opportunities and Supports

> *Development occurs when young people engage in activities that are challenging, with an impact on others; require personal responsibility for the consequences; involve decision-making and collaborative effort; and offer chances for preparation and reflection* (Mary Kohler, 1974, cited by Schine, 1995).

Young people need to achieve a full range, not a subset, of desirable youth outcomes. But what is it that youth require to achieve these outcomes? Most fundamentally, young people require nutritious food, adequate shelter, and personal safety. Further, to prepare them for adulthood, young people require ready access to high-quality education and career-oriented services as well as physical health, mental health, and rehabilitative services for when the young person requires preventive or treatment-oriented assistance. Without such "basics," young people face powerful odds.

But services alone are not sufficient. Services too often involve adults providing or communicating things to and for young people. This is important, but it is also clear that young people require opportunities and supports to achieve desirable outcomes. Opportunities and supports complement services in that they are characterized by active involvement of young people in the experience. They are characterized as much by the process—the roles, responsibilities, personal connections, and relationships of young people—as by the "information content" of the experience.

Over the past two years, staff at the Academy for Educational Development's Center for Youth Development and Policy Research have been asking youth and exemplary practitioners to identify key opportunities and supports. We have been synthesizing available research and reviewing the excellent work of many scholars—past and present—who have sought to identify key "inputs" of development (Zeldin and Price, 1995; Zeldin, 1995). Congruence among these different sources of information is remarkable.

One finding from this review is that developmental opportunities and supports can exist in many places, not only in services and formal programs, but in also diverse

settings such as families, youth organizations, peer groups, workplaces, and religious institutions. Opportunities and supports are "place neutral." That is, young people will benefit greatly from opportunities and supports largely independent of where and with whom they exist. It does not matter very much, for example, if young people perceive themselves as "members" of a school, a work team, a youth choir, or a youth organization. What does matter is that they have the ongoing experience of being a member and that they believe that they are a contributing and valued part of the group. Similarly, young people require and benefit from nurturance, high expectations, and fair discipline. But the actual mix of adults and peers who offer these supports is less important than the experiences (Zeldin, Kimball, and Price, 1995).

To achieve desirable youth outcomes—be they problem prevention, status achievement, or developmental—available data demonstrate that young people require the following opportunities and supports:

- Opportunities for active and self-directed learning: Instruction, be it formal or informal, contributes to desirable youth outcomes when young people have the opportunity to be active learners and critical thinkers—to receive information from various sources and experiences, to manipulate and test it, to make their own meaning of it, and, finally, to express the implications to self and others.

- Opportunities to take on new roles and responsibilities: Active and experiential learning promotes desirable outcomes most readily when it is done with a purpose that is perceived as relevant by the young person. It is the existence of challenging roles and responsibilities that motivates young people to capitalize on opportunities and not simply to let them pass by. Challenging roles and responsibilities can be experienced through

    - being a member of an organized group
    - contributing and having an influence on communities and other youth
    - engaging in part-time work, but only when the young person is legitimately supported in the experience

- Ongoing emotional support from adults and peers: While the strongest potential source of support is the family, young people can benefit fully from ongoing support from other significant adults—teachers, relatives, youth workers—who consistently demonstrate acceptance, affirmation, warmth, interest, and a sense of fun.

- Ongoing motivational support and high standards from adults: Young people benefit when they are expected to abide by clear rules and boundaries and when they are guided and monitored in their efforts to achieve high expectations.

- Ongoing access to strategic support and social networks—Young people achieve desirable outcomes when they and/or their parents are involved in social networks. Extended social networks—consisting of relatives, pastors, school teachers, youth workers, neighbors, and "fictive kin" (significant adult friends)—are a prime source of strategic support for young people, especially for young people from high-risk situations. For these youth, strategic support and extended social networks provide the access to vital information and resources that is typically afforded to more advantaged populations.

In brief, adolescent development occurs through opportunities and supports in safe places, and, while important for all young people, opportunities and supports are especially critical for youth who have disengaged, or are in the process of disengaging, from the formal systems of their communities. The implication is that all programs—regardless of their stated mission—should seek to provide opportunities and supports.

School-to-Work Through the Opportunities and Supports Lens

School-to-work practitioners are recognizing that these opportunities and supports are integral elements of best practice for career preparation. Certainly, the "content" of school-to-work programs will always be oriented largely towards career issues, but from the perspective of the young person, there are other important content areas. Model STW programs are offering young people a broader set of opportunities and supports as described below.

- The Cambridge-Lesley Careers in Education Program in Cambridge, Massachusetts, provides opportunities for active and self-directed learning by integrating the young person's experience and aspirations with learning in the classroom and workplace. Students maintain journals in which they reflect upon their work experiences and write about specific topics in education. The journal also serves as a vehicle through which the young people can reflect on themselves in light of their new experiences.

- Opportunities for expanding roles and responsibilities are provided through the Aviation Magnet at Shawnee High School in Louisville, Kentucky, which

provides structured opportunities for students to explore their experiences and learning from their worksite and flying experiences. In the Performance-Based Diploma Program at Fort Pierce (Florida) High School, peer counseling sessions are used to build a group identity among the young people in the program. At the Oakland (California) Health and Bioscience Academy, sophomores undertake 100 hours of internship at local health clinics and community service organizations. In the Protech Program in Boston, Massachusetts, students first learn about basic hospital functions such as pharmacy, cardiology, medical library, and radiology. Then, they take on legitimate responsibilities in the departments.

- Emotional and motivational supports are provided to students in the Baltimore (Maryland) Finance Academy and the Oregon Youth Transition Program where students are exposed to a variety of adults who have different "functional" relationships with the youth, but each of whom provides emotional support. In the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Education for Employment Program, where many students are placed in worksites, the students have to abide by the rules of employers, where they are expected to perform and deal with issues of ethics, confidentiality, workplace skills, and dependability.

- Programs like the Student Career Opportunity Paths in Veradale, Washington, and the Comprehensive Employment Work and Transition Program in Charlottesville, Virginia, provide career-related strategic support to those who desperately need it. Workplace mentors and transition specialists provide individualized attention and offer a "caring" adult to the young people, enabling youth to explore different options and aspects of the job, as well as issues they consider important.

In sum, "high-quality" school-to-work programs go beyond defining effectiveness as a set of service options characterized by an integrated mix of school-based, work-based, and career-oriented support components. Such programs consider not only the knowledge and skills that they impart, but also the opportunities and supports that they offer to young people. If the school-to-work movement is truly concerned with developing young people into productive adults who can actively participate as members of families, communities, and workplaces, as well as benefit from lifelong learning, it must move beyond helping them transition into careers. Using a youth development lens to incorporate a broader set of opportunities and supports will greatly assist attainment of this goal.

Linking School-to-Work and Youth Development to Build Healthy Communities for Youth

Healthy communities for youth are those that have "integrated services" and provide a rich array of opportunities and supports to all young people. School-to-work programs have an integral role in creating these communities. This is not to imply that every STW program has to do it all. Rather, it is a call for all community stakeholders to attend to youth development as an explicit part of their mission. As Cahill (1993) concludes,

> [Employment-oriented] *programs may not be able to provide support directly to participants in meeting all needs and tasks, but they must pay attention to how youth find routes to meeting them or risk young people's disaffiliation as survival needs overwhelm affiliation to the program.*

A focus on the full range of desirable youth outcomes and the provision of opportunities and supports to all young people provides a lens through which school-to-work and youth development fields might find and build on the common mission of creating healthy communities for young people. The implication is that school-to-work and youth development practitioners should strive to include as many legitimate opportunities and supports in their programs as possible. These experiences, collectively, need to be aimed at both "careers" and "development."

But an additional challenge is of equal or greater importance. The fact remains that until leaders of political and community fields place a greater emphasis on preparation than on deterrence, both fields will never achieve their potential influence on young people. And until schools and employers incorporate the lessons from both fields, many young people will face unnecessary barriers. An urgency, therefore, is also for public education and advocacy, not simply for one or both fields, but for the creation of high-quality, community-based places, opportunities, and supports for all young people.

The complementary nature of the two fields provides an excellent foundation for community-wide partnerships. An emphasis on career preparation draws attention to the "school-to-work field," consisting of public schools, career-oriented practitioners, and employers. Given its mission, the field emphasizes school- and work-based learning and is not strongly connected to other community organizations. An emphasis on development draws attention to the "youth development field," a variety of organizations that youth attend voluntarily. Given this mission, the field seeks to provide youth with a rich array of developmental opportunities and supports and is tied strongly to all aspects of the community, except employers and schools.

It is both the commonalities and the differences that offer the two fields the potential to provide community leadership on behalf of young people. The two fields have yet to join forces, but their goals and program strategies are highly compatible. Partnerships will not come easily. The emphasis of school-to-work programs on serving the needs of employers will be difficult at times to reconcile with the developmental needs of young people. And, finally, youth development occurs most naturally through the voluntary engagement of youth, but this is not always possible in school-to-work settings. There will always be tensions as to whether after-school time is best spent preparing for a career or in a youth center. Tensions around the bottom-line accountability of the two fields—performance outcomes versus developmental outcomes—will have to be constantly negotiated.

Despite these tensions, it appears as though both fields need each other to fully achieve their own goals in preparing young people. The rationale for working together to build healthy communities for youth is clear:

- Both fields recognize that academic and career-related skills are not enough to ensure that young people can move successfully through the tasks of adolescence, much less be prepared for the demands of adulthood. Conversely, young people without strong academic and employment skills will remain at a disadvantage in the current economy.

- Both fields require vastly improved schools to fully achieve their goals. Alone, the fields can often be ignored in debates and discussions. When both are at the school reform table, change becomes possible.

- Both fields have complementary "sources of credibility" and resources. The school-to-work field can best access the educational system and employers. The youth development field can best access community organizations and residents, as well as youth who are at-risk or who have become disengaged from school and community—the primary population that makes up the "forgotten half."

As the two fields begin to share their expertise and resources, the respective systems will be strengthened. This may in turn spark community-wide mobilization and partnership efforts to ensure that all youth have access to high-quality academic and career-oriented services, as well as access to a full range of opportunities and supports.

Conclusion

The strength and vitality of the STW movement are that it seeks to create systems and programs that will demand high performance from all students and provide the supports and opportunities to enable them to achieve. It emphasizes the necessity for a clear linkage between education and employment by making academic instruction more career-oriented and by using work experiences as an instructional strategy. It is essentially an institutional change strategy focusing both on schools and workplaces and on building a system to connect the two.

In this paper, we have argued that the STW movement can benefit and be strengthened by (1) incorporating a youth development perspective to serving young people and (2) building bridges not only with schools and employers but also with the "youth development field," specifically, national and community-based youth organizations.

It is important that knowledge about youth development be explicitly applied to the creation of school-based learning and workplace learning. This means that STW will have to pay attention to the knowledge base about the process of overall maturation, and in particular, to the way developmental needs affect young people's abilities to learn. For example, young people have strong needs to gain a sense of safety and structure, belonging and membership, responsibility and autonomy, mastery and self-worth. As STW seeks to promote these developmental youth outcomes, young people will be better positioned to benefit from these programs. Similarly, young people need to gain a full range of competencies, such as social and cultural skills, health-related skills, and civic skills. Again, as young people gain these competencies, they will be better able to develop the intellectual and career-oriented skills that are the hallmark of STW.

As STW continues to build systems, it is vital for practitioners to self-assess and reflect on their actions and programs. It will be important for STW to explicitly seek to promote developmental outcomes among young people—not only a strong sense of identity, but also the full range of competencies necessary to move successfully into adulthood. To meet this goal, STW will also have to critically examine its programs and activities to ensure that young people receive a full range of developmental opportunities and supports. Youth development organizations will be a key resource in assisting the STW movement, as practitioners seek to promote developmental outcomes among young people by offering them a rich array of opportunities and supports. Especially in low-income and immigrant communities, youth organizations fill crucial gaps for youth resulting from the limitations of schools and other social

institutions. Additionally, leadership in youth organizations tends to more closely represent the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of participants than do schools or public sector service agencies and to be more disposed to focus on the strengths of youth and of families rather than on their deficits. STW programs need not, and should not, seek to provide all opportunities and supports to young people. In collaboration with youth organizations, however, the STW movement must take a lead in ensuring that all young people receive these opportunities and supports in different places in their lives.

STW systems also will benefit greatly from involving youth development organizations from the earliest stages. Expanding the dialogue at the planning stages of STW efforts allows for different questions to be asked and for issues about the impacts of neighborhoods, families, and other broader environmental factors to be identified and discussed as central elements of systems design. Further, such organizations are well positioned to offer ongoing training and technical assistance to further these ends and to bring a full range of community leaders, practitioners, and youth into planning and implementation discussions. The STW and youth development movements have similar goals, share many common practices, but bring somewhat different types of expertise and constituencies to the task of creating supportive communities for young people. Together, they touch the lives of all young people, providing the foundation for powerful and necessary collaborative action.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act offers the chance for states and local communities to design and implement a system that prepares young people for high-quality careers or further education and training. The underlying mission of the act, however, is to prepare young people to be productive members of their communities and society and to be lifelong learners. To provide the necessary opportunities and supports for all young people to reach this goal requires that STW programs incorporate many of the essential elements of the youth development perspective and invite youth development practitioners to be active members of both local school-to-work partnerships and the national school-to-work movement.

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